

GCE

Drama Example Materials

Candidate C - Example Work with Commentaries

Edexcel

GCE Drama (6DR01 paper 01)

2009

Language:

Oedipus:

Character	Key Quotation	Meaning and practical application:
Oedipus.	“Where did it come from? Was it your child? Or did someone give it to you?”	In this quotation Oedipus is determined to discover information. The questions quicken the pace of you would say the line, creating tension so therefore the actor would show his frustration through an loud, fast voice and hands on hips to show his status.
Oedipus.	“The nightmarish blackness that surrounds me. I shall never see daylight again”	The use of rhetoric language makes Oedipus seem very heroic it also shows how much isolation he is going to be in.. This would be acted in quite a desperate yet poised manor with a sense of tiredness, with the use of ‘S’ sounds.
Creon.	“There’s something unclean in our city. Born here. Living here. It pollutes everything. We harbour it.”	Spoke near the beginning about the oracles’ prophesy. Creon uses short sentences. The pace of this quote seems rushed but would be presented in a mono-tone way. The actor would play this at ease, calm despite of the subject matter; poised and not show emotion such as worry.

Metamorphosis:

Gregor	“go away! Its nonsense – it must go away – spots on my belly?! Ooh! They’re itching [scratches furiously]”	Spoken in a fast way with a quirky voice, which quick breaks in between words. With the position of Gregor and the strange voice and interchange of words it would be frightening. The short sentences would create tension, and be rushed, showing Gregor’s distress.
Gregor	“The apple’s still inside me – I can’t move – I cant climb.”	Spoken but very breathy a struggling tone, The last “can’t” would be said softer, shows sympathy for Gregor. It would make them see Gregor in a different state. The use of ‘Can’t’ adds empathy, it suggest an end when the line finishes.
Lodgers	1 st Lodger : We’d like to be called at eight o’clock. 2 nd L: Prompt! 3 rd L: breakfast hot and ready at eight fifteen! 2 nd L: prompt!	Enter in from DSL. When the line spoken they leave the line and create a second line. Spoken in the same tone as each other. Every time each lodger speaks they would move closer to the family DSR and move in the exact same way as each other. This would create a fresh tone with its rhythm and the audience would feel a bit light hearted by this.

Non verbal Communication:

Oedipus the King:

This is near the end of the play where Jocasta has realised that she is Oedipus' mother, she tries to persuade Oedipus not to go on and find out the truth. It is an important moment because it's where the pieces of the puzzle slot together.

Playing Jocasta:

"Chorus:
I think this shepherd,
and the other shepherd You've
already sent for,
Must be identical.
But ask the queen. She's sure to know.

Oedipus:
Jocasta, you know this shepherd,
the one we've sent for. Is it the same man?

*Jocasta is white with fear,
hardly able to reply.*

Jocasta:
*what man...? What does it matter...
One shepherd or another..."*

On this line I would stare out into the audience eyes and freeze the rest of my body I would do this to show that I am suddenly aware of the fact that I was Oedipus' mother.

When Oedipus addresses me my head will bow slightly and I would start breathing heavily. I would do this to show the growing turmoil, distress and fear

After standing in silence I would then speak with a hint of laughter but my facial expressions, such as inverted eyebrows and mouth open it would then show that I am trying to steer Oedipus away from the situation.

Metamorphosis:

This is where the lodgers come to the Samsa's house to stay, they are just introducing the lodgers to the house, it is an important moment because people from society are coming in and changing the situation.

Playing Greta:

"MR.S: [uncomfortably] Hmmph!
[Clearing his throat] there's er...
one thing you should know
before you make a decision.

1st L: yes?

MR.S: we...er...keep a pet
in the back room.

All L's: oh yes?

MR.S: I wondered if that
would bother you?

All L's: oh no,
we're fond of pets."

When Mr Samsa is bringing up the subject of Gregor I will become giggly, bite my lip, head bowed to show a mischievous side, as if to say what your about to hear is astonishing.

On this line, I would change my stance, look worried as if they are going to leave, eyes wide and hands brought up to my chest clenched to my show fear.

On this line I would strike a sigh of relief, release my clenched fists lean head back and revert back to giggling, I would do this to show that I am relieved they what to remain despite of Gregor.

Vocal Awareness:

Oedipus:

Taken from the first choral ode. The language is important here because of the rhyming, the language also creates vivid and disturbing images.

This line would be said with sympathy, for this reason I would use female voices and use them so they sound in despair, I would deliver them this way because the voice of females in despair would make the audience feel sympathetic.

Our agonies are beyond telling,
A whole city slowly dying
From an enemy no man can fight.

Men would say this line aggressively with anger because they can't fight it. 'No man can fight' would be said in echo by the women, like a whisper, which would show the reality and despair.

Slime and fungus on orchard and meadow,

Death in the womb, and birth in the shadow
Of death, and in the mother's sight.

All of chorus would say this line Aggressively and angry to show their anger at the situation.

Men die without number, like birds flying,
Like fire consuming, despairing, crying,
As they pass to the shadows of night.

This line said in cannon, the use of sibilance would be effective said in a whisper, to show the lasting effect on the city when the tragedy occurs.

Metamorphosis:

Taken from one of Gregor's monologues. The language is important because it shows a sense of sarcasm and jealousy.

This line would be said with confusion And frustration that he is in this incapable Position.

This line would be said with a disgusting Tone, as if he is out raged by his father, Realising that he did the man of the house' Job.

This would be said with a lot of confusion and Anger, Gregor would say this as a strained Shout.

This line would be said very teary and sad An exaggerated cry, to show a contrast of emotions in What Gregor is feeling.

"Could that have been you, father – you used to lie so wearily sunk in your bed as I set off to work, you used to welcome me when I returned still in your dressing gown, you who could never rise to your feet but could only lift a feeble arm. Who on Sunday's walked between me and my mother, shuffling along with your stick at an even slower rate than us. Where did you get such strength...? You threw that apple in so hard, it sank into my back!"

Characterisation:

Oedipus:

Oedipus at the beginning of the play is made to be very high up, it seems this way as he has no introduction and just jumps into his monologue, beginning with "my children" it is very strong as it is clear Oedipus immediately thinks and knows he is bigger than the people of Thebes, he uses very patronising arrogant sentences, that are full of self belief and promises. "Where did it come from? Was it your child? Or did someone give it to you?" in this quotation Oedipus begins to fall in status, he has lost his poise and control and in doing so he lowers his status. If I was to act this I would of made sure to the audience that I have a lack of control with the situation and my status is falling, I would do this by rushing my sentences and using gestures like hands to the head, shaking my head and rushing for an answer. A decline in status was sure to of happened Oedipus could not have avoided such a fate, and it was sure that his power would decline. Sophocles made this apparent by making Oedipus overly sure of everything so that when he is proved the unclean man he is stumped and doesn't quite know how to act.

Metamorphosis:

Greta grows up as Gregor dies. Gregor acts as a catalyst for Greta, he speeds up her growth. At the beginning Greta was always there for Gregor and felt like she had to impress him, she would look up to Gregor. However she grows up fast when he turns into an insect and has an epiphany, she is no longer a slave to him, she has been taken for granted but now she is old enough to be her own person. She has had enough with him and therefore thinks it better of he died.

She goes on a journey in the play from idolising her brother to gaining independence through his change. "I don't agree with you mother – I always hear him bumping into things... all right now, let's begin" Greta takes on a maternal approach with Gregor here, I would play this as if I'm trying to act older, use my head, raised to speak to Mrs Samsa and sharply turn around and go to Gregor's room, as if a child playing an adult. I would speak in a motherly high pitched tone to also show her older side.

The social/cultural/historical and political context:

Oedipus:

In ancient Greece the expectation if you were going to watch a piece of theatre was high, and also the audience knew the play. Many people turned out to watch Greek theatre, around 12000 people as it was their main form of entertainment education and religion. Because theatre was this main form for them they expected to be taught religious morals, and to reinforce their religious values. Myths were very central to the culture and way of life, and theatre would touch the whole culture.

Sophocles life influenced a lot of what Oedipus was about. Sophocles had a military background he had a high belief in strong discipline and moral values. He was a very patriotic man and loyal to his country. He wrote Oedipus to show what can happen if democracy goes wrong; of course it seems a bit extreme however to the God loving society they would have believed everything that happened in the play, and the dull character of Creon, is an example of good and what can happen if your one of the more settled citizens.

The play in 2008 says to us about how power can corrupt people. Oedipus still has relevance for today's audience, their reactions would alter but other than that the same moral message would come through. We can also relate it to the politics of today and understand how money and power can corrupt people. This is more apparent in celebrities, such as Britney Spears, the power she had for so long has corrupted her badly,

Metamorphosis:

Berkoff saw acting as escapism, which the whole being can be used by an actor, and it brings a combination of pain and excitement, just the voice and body to communicate. Compared to Steven Berkoff who enjoyed the isolation he had. Kafka felt was that he was one of the few German speaking citizens living in Czech. The Isolation Kafka felt was echoed throughout his life, with relationships that failed due to his lack of understanding and expressing his feelings

Berkoff was trying to say to his audience that if you are not the normal in society, don't speak, act of behave the same then isolation could occur, it shows how closed society are to accepting anybody.

Metamorphosis shows a need to succeed in society, especially from Gregor. He might be perceived as a socialist character; he has to work to help the others in his family, not for his own private good. Everyone in Metamorphosis feels the need to be successful, but at the expense of others. The political statement I think Berkoff could be making by using socialism as a theme is that people work for others, a community however some are undeserving of this fortune. The beetle state is a metaphor for how peoples opinions of others can change with the downfall of another person, this relates to modern society because it shows that one day you could be the best person there ever was but the next you could be a total opposite to this, Berkoff makes us think of how we act and isolate people because they aren't what we want them to be, he challenges our perceptions of life because he shows us just how cruel people can become unintentionally through change in status.

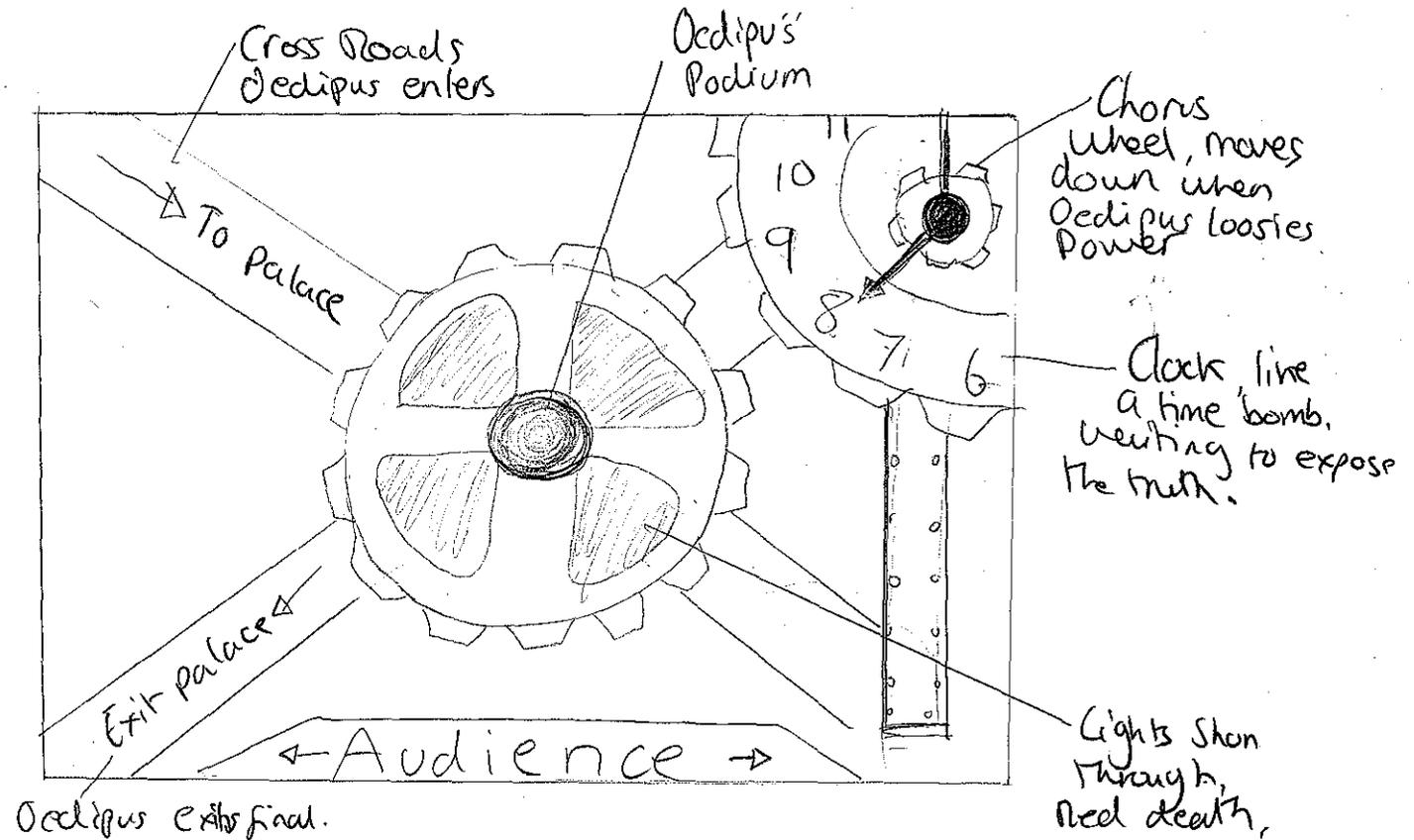
Oedipus: Visual, Aural, Spatial.

I want the play to create the effect of time span like how clockwork the situation is. The fact that Oedipus has he's life planned out by fate, every second being controlled by the Gods.

I would stage Oedipus stabbing his eyes in the following ways:

Visual:

The centre clock and small podium where Oedipus stands will begin fairly high up, and as the play goes on and we see the decline of Oedipus so therefore when he stabs his eyes he will be low down. The lighting would turn red to show juxtaposing images, red of the blood and ironically red of Royalty of which he is no longer. This would be in a spotlight. His costume of a royal blazer would be off to expose a red cross on his body, been there all along, like a metaphor for the situation and we see a projected shadow of Jocasta hanging up stage right.



Aural:

Where sounds of chorus cheers and clog turnings and ticking clocks, now there will remain no noise apart from the sound of a rope swinging, showing how close he was to Jocasta's death. When he is speaking there will be an echo to show the lasting effect he will have on the city.

Spatial:

Oedipus will be centre stage, he will look up when he speaks, when he goes over to Jocasta and takes the brooches he will walk over looking very vacant and then remain up stage right next to the image of Jocasta and remain there. He would make small movements to show his despair.

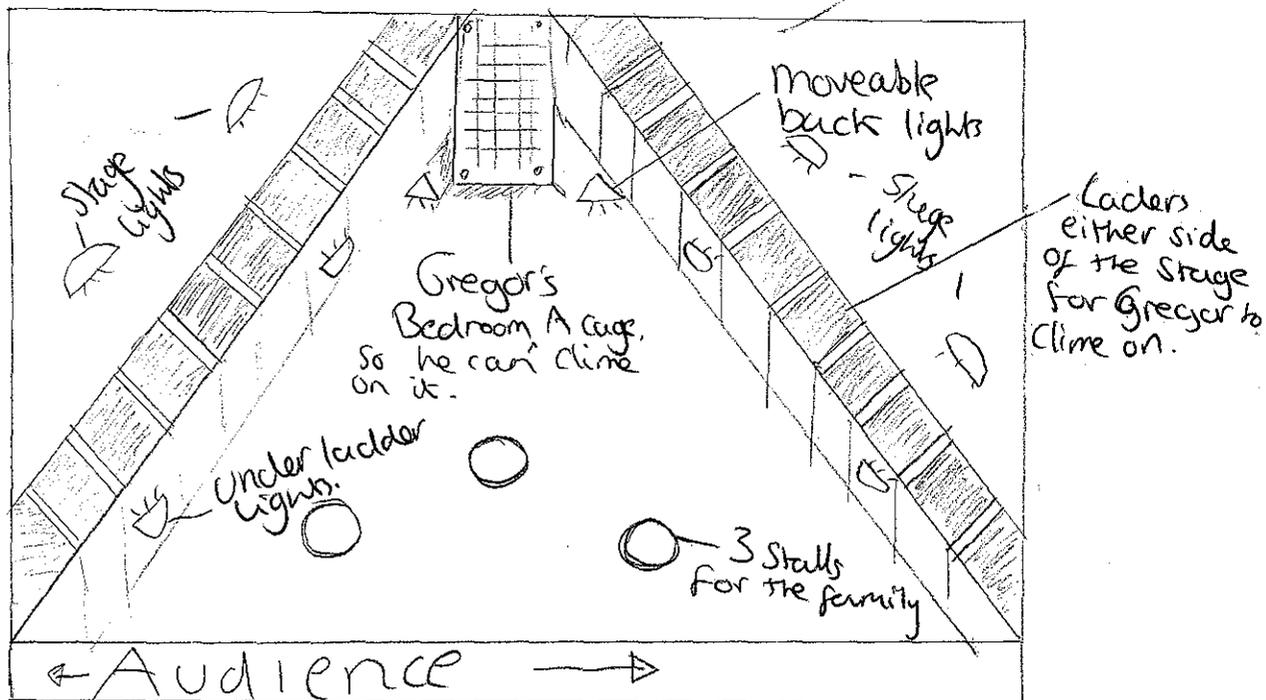
Metamorphosis: Visual, Aural, Spatial.

I want the play to create the effect of claustrophobia. I want the audience to feel involved and interact with the play, in a compacted auditorium.

I would stage Gregor's escape in the following ways:

Visual:

The way the stage tilts into the auditorium, this would create an exact point of attention, bringing more important things to the front and almost into the audiences' face, creating tension at high points in the play, such as when Gregor escapes from his room, he would move down stage centre whilst the rest of the family are seen upstage, this would also have the effect that the rest of the family are larger than Gregor. The audiences' position would be tightly compacted to again create the effect of claustrophobia.



Aural:

Sound effects would be made by the actors such as, ticking and door banging, I think this would add to the abstract atmosphere. So in this scene I would have the actors making heavy breathing sounds into their microphones to show how Gregor feels when he has escaped.

Spatial:

When Gregor escapes and the apple gets thrown into his back I would, use the backlights to shine forward into the audience and get Gregor to use the ladder on stage left to climb down and make himself get to the front of the stage. The rest of the family I would position upstage centre to get the effect that the family are bigger than Gregor because of the height, when Mr Samsa throws the apple I would make sure this was in slow motion so the audience can focus on it and know that it is a crucial part to the play.

Response to practitioner

Oedipus and Kneehigh:

The key features of Kneehigh theatre are:

- Generosity, passion, bravery, humility, ambition, instinct and irreverence
- Storytelling, circus, audience interaction, physical comedy, pantomime, turning dark, in your face, ideas developed through improvisation, music, ensemble, multiple characters, puppetry

In Kneehigh the use of ensemble is very inspiring. For example in their version of the Bacchae the choral use was just as important as lead roles, the chorus would be made up off the entire cast and multiple characterisations would take place. In Oedipus I would approach the chorus in a Kneehigh practice by creating multiple characterisations, characters in the all seeing all knowing chorus could also play characters such as the shepherd and Tiresias so the audience get the impression that they are all knowing, I would use their style to improve audience interaction with the chorus, so that a bond can be formed with chorus and audience.

In Oedipus where there is an exchange between Tiresias and Oedipus, using the the influence of Kneehigh I would stage it to be pantomime comedy. I would first of all stage Tiresias looking down stage left and begin talking to Oedipus who is down stage right, a cliché way to introduce a blind character however it would receive pantomime laughs. I would also include pantomime gags such as hitting Tiresias hitting Oedipus accidentally with his cane.

Metamorphosis and Artaud.

The key features for Artaud are:

- Theatre of Cruelty, audience involvement, unconventional settings, conventional actor-audience relationship, oversized props, loud sound, sensory experience, physical, gesture, masks and puppetry, feeling and emotions, dislocation.

Artaud believed that theatre would be more immediate where gestures and movements replaced words. For Gregor this is vital, what the audience should find most disturbing about the prospect of a human insect would be the movement and mannerisms that relate to it, but the feeling is equally important, when Gregor realises something isn't right I would perhaps make Gregor very breathless, hard to breathe. To focus on the breathing aspect, such as chest going up and down slowly and the sound projected, would sound suffocating and the audience would almost get a sense of what it would be like to feel suffocation.

When the lodgers enter I would use the idea of dislocation. I would make the lodgers speak directly to the audience and the same with the family but as if they are talking to each other, I would do this because the audience would get two different feelings from each group, the lodgers would make the audience quite on edge and the family would relax them, these juxtaposing emotions would put the audience in a vulnerable state, like how Gregor would feel.

Interpretation:

Oedipus:

Messenger speech near the end:

I would use the chorus to create this image,
I would have them marching hands on head
And then slowly making the movements more
Exaggerated shaking the head and making the
Image of tearing hair out. Another way you
Could show this is to have the chorus
Muttering various phrases, repeatedly to have
The sound effect.

I would also put the messenger in the middle
Of the chorus with a single spot light on him
Which would change to a red light when the
Chorus act out the lines.

“...she went straight into the bedroom,
tearing
her hair out in handfuls, and muttering
like a madwomen. She slammed the door,
and locked herself in: and we heard her
shouting,
Something about Laius, her first husband,
Who’s been dead for, and the night
They conceived the son who was to kill
him
And breed misbegotten children by a
child...”

Here I would use the chorus to repeat the
words in canon, increasing tempo and volume
To show the confusion of Jocasta, then on the line
Where it says ‘Kill’ the chorus would turn to face
Oedipus point and start chanting violently ‘Kill’
Another way you could do this is have the chorus
Falling one by one on the floor then to whisper ‘Kill’
I would do this to show that Oedipus is the son.

Metamorphosis:

Gregor’s speech when he can’t get up:

I would make Gregor twitch his leg led on his back,
Speaking very normally, slightly getting more and
More worried. This could be interpreted as a symbol
For the weight on Gregor to look after the family,
So an alternative would be Gregor to move his legs
And then his body come up, as if his legs were a
Weight.

“what’s happened to me –
everything seems the same – it’s
still raining outside – oh, my leg –
what’s wrong with my legs? Turn
over and go back to sleep, it’s a
bad dream – I can’t turn over- I
can’t turn!”

I would have Gregor say this whilst laughing slightly
To show how unreal the situation is. I would have him try to get comfortable but fail.
This could be interpreted as how his life may seem like a dream but in reality it is a bad
dream.

Live theatre review:

DV8 'To be straight with you.' April 2008 The Sherman Theatre Cardiff, written and directed by Lloyd Newson.

What was so exhilarating about witnessing such a fine performance from DV8 was the incredible dramatic devices Newson used to create a boundary pushing piece on the exploration of society's tolerance or perhaps intolerance toward culture, religion and homosexuality.

I never imagined that the use of visual aids such as projection could create such a stylistic scene, and when I saw DV8's intelligent and sophisticated approach to the use of this technology it completely altered my perception of modern theatre.

A giant gauze screen descends from the top of the proscenium, it fills upstage, an image of a globe appears upstage right and an actor playing the role of a lecturer steps into the globe, or so it appears, and he begins to explain what countries give severe punishment as a consequence of being a homosexual, and religion that presents a problem for homosexual people to live in honesty. As he does so he touches the country which enforces this law, and in perfect synchronization that part turns red, also he was able to 'move' the globe projection with his hands which also happened in perfect timing.

I thought that this particular moment of the play stood for many reasons; one being that it occurred at the beginning of the play so it offered an impacting start that enticed the audience. Another being that it was a highly original and inspiring way to present factual information, the character 'Lecturer' also contributed, the way he acted was very realistic and reliable, I think the projection also helped the performance of the actor, he was speaking very relaxed to the audience, and being a member of the audience I felt that the context which the information was being presented in made the atmosphere seem very true to a lecture. By using this dramatic technique in the near beginning of the play it opens your mind directly to the social and historical content of the piece. I therefore conclude that the use of projection proved highly successful and influential.

The use of recorded sound is another dominating factor which contributes to understanding the social content of the play. The recorded sound that Newson uses is from accounts of politicians, and homosexual people, in one particular scene they used this recorded sound and the actors tried to recreate what the scene could have looked liked, the also spoke the same words of that from the recording, by doing this it added depth to the sound however I don't think it was completely effective as there was almost too much going on to focus on, and it wasn't obvious whether it was intentional to speak over the recording., if they didn't speak but mouthed it i personally think it would of proved more successful. However a scene where recorded sound seemed very successful was where they took another real life account played it and at the same time, certain phrases were projected onto the gauze screen. This was all that was on stage. This worked because Newson could control the audiences focus point by putting emphasis on certain words or phrases.

Dv8 are renowned for physical theatre and in 'to be straight with you' they didn't fail to impress. The opening scene an actor enters from a door down centre stage, she begins speaking a monologue about what homosexuality is about to her , whilst doing this her legs are frantically moving, whilst her upper body seems poised and natural what is key

in this moment is that it relates back to the social content that out of 200 people only 2 were willing to show their face on screen, the others were only focused on their legs and hands, like in this scene you are not focusing on what her upper body is doing but what her lower body and voice are saying. I therefore think this is a highly successful technique in which can be linked back to the social content, this would of also helped the acting performance because they understood why their legs were an important feature to make an impact.

A scene of a boy skipping around the stage whilst telling a comical story of how his father found out he was a 'batty boy'. The way Newson directed this scene made it cover the visual, aural and spatial elements. The visual image of a boy skipping was quite hypnotic, he would move from downstage right to up stage left in a matter of skips, the image of the fast skipping created a spinning capsule like image perhaps showing he is in a protective bubble, but when his father finds out and tries to hurt him, he hits the back wall, stops skipping and the atmosphere dropped completely, it shows a contrast to his protective bubble, and now that protection had ended because of his homosexuality. The sound of the skipping was quite entrancing, the repetitive skipping noise added to the atmosphere it had a violent edge to it which was quite haunting, but at the same time it had a relaxing aura. The spatial elements of him skipping covered the whole stage, like a fly we watched him go here and there. I think this scene was very successful because it covered the elements of visual, aural and spatial, by doing this it enticed the audience, hypnotising and engaging them into the subject matter.

A play as a whole astonished me, if I had to pick a key moment to focus on I wouldn't know where to start as each scene contributed to the lasting effect that it has on myself as an audience member. The use of projection, music, the quirky movements and contact improvisation, have changed my perception of modern theatre so in conclusion 'To be straight with you' was incredibly triumphant.

Word count: 971

GCE

Drama Example Materials

Candidate C - Commentaries

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GCE Drama (6DR01 paper 01)

2009

Commentary on Exploration Notes for Candidate C:

Language:

The candidate shows good understanding of how the nature and position of language within the texts can be exploited by a performer to create meaning. She has grasped the need to rush lines, when to take time over them and how to use them to create tension. This section is clear evidence of the candidate's practical application of the texts' language.

Non-verbal communication:

There are some very clear examples of ways a performer might play a character's lines in one scene of each of the texts. She contextualises the moments in each of the plays very clearly and concisely, going into detail as to how each moment could be expressed through movement and gesture, body language and focus.

Vocal awareness:

Whilst this section is good evidence of the candidate's understanding of the language of each text, and how an actor might perform it to affect a response from the audience, she does not engage with how a performer might develop this facility. There are no links with practical exploration in the workshop.

Characterisation:

The candidate shows the decisions she has come to, after she has workshoped the character in each of the texts. The writing is detailed but there is no sense of how she got to here through drama exploration.

Social, cultural, historical and political context:

There are some interesting details about the texts being studied. For example the candidate has thought about the origins of the play Oedipus but not which aspects of this are exemplified in the text itself. The candidate's understanding of the political stance of Berkoff and his play Metamorphosis is incomplete and there is a sense that she is repeating some notes taken in class, or from a source. Her stated opinion that the beetle stands for how people's opinions can change about someone shows a lack of understanding of the issues in the text.

Again, there is no reference to how practical exploration of this knowledge and opinion has influenced her ideas.

Visual, aural and spatial elements of a production:

There is very clear detail of the candidate's ideas for how she would like productions of the texts to be staged. Most of these ideas look to have considerable potential. She gives some reasons for these ideas and occasionally discusses how the audience might react to her ideas.

The response to a practitioner:

The section about Artaud is stronger. Here she explores some of the practitioner ideas through particular scenes and lines- this shows how her practical work has been put to good use.

The Kneehigh section is shakier. She clearly grasps the idea of the ensemble but does not understand its power. She does not take us through any practical work carried out to convince the reader that this set of practitioner ideas might add some understanding of the text. Nor do she explore why Kneehigh's practice might be so appropriate for this text.

Interpretation:

Each section proposes some detailed ideas for staging of short text extracts. There are some explanations for these proposals but there is not enough use of the word 'because' following each idea, in justification.

Moderator comments:

These notes are evidence of good understanding of the texts explored. The candidate balances her notes between the plays and sometimes uses very clear examples from her exploration work to back up her ideas.

The style of the notes is sound and even though she does not go into sufficient detail of how she developed her ideas about each play, she gives us a clear taste of her personal take on each text. Had she used clearer justifications for her proposals for how these texts can become theatre, she would have been more successful.

The quality of the written communication is good.

Band 3

Commentary on Theatre Review for Candidate C:

This is a joyous piece of writing that conveys the candidate's excitement about a production of DV8's *To be Straight With You*. She is aware of how the production brings out the meaning of the text for the audience, enlivening her writing with clearly expressed accounts of her own emotional responses. She never tells the reader that she simply loved the work; rather she states that it was 'triumphant'. She explores the details of how scenes were constructed and we get a clear idea of how meaning was explored in the piece and then transferred to the audience. There is a genuine sense of a production effectively realised, clearly understood by the candidate and very well conveyed to us, the reader.

Band 1